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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 006915

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [KNNP](#) [IN](#) [IR](#) [PK](#) [BG](#) [INDO](#) [PAK](#)

SUBJECT: INDIAN DEPUTY NSA UPBEAT ON PAKISTAN, HESITANT ON IRAN

REF: A. NEW DELHI 6804

[B](#). NEW DELHI 6840

[C](#). STATE 163143

[D](#). NEW DELHI 6842

[E](#). NEW DELHI 5382

Classified By: A/DCM Geoff Pyatt for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#). (C) Summary: Deputy NSA VK Nambiar told A/DCM and Poloff on September 7 that he was optimistic the Indo-Pak peace process would continue to make slow progress, and looked forward to PM Manmohan Singh's meeting with President Musharraf during the UNGA summit. Nambiar highlighted instability in Bangladesh as a growing worry to Indian leaders, but was unbriefed on Foreign Minister Natwar Singh's recent visit to Tehran. End Summary.

Hoping Iran Crisis Blows Over  
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[2](#). (C) New Delhi does not yet have a clear idea of the direction that Tehran's new regime will take, Nambiar and NSC Joint Secretary Arvind Gupta told us. There are sufficient historical precedents and ongoing projects in the Indo-Iran relationship to continue in a generally positive direction, but as of now the GOI does not know what Tehran's expectations of the relationship are. The new regime appears to have increased interest in proceeding with the proposed gas pipeline across Pakistan, Gupta reported.

[3](#). (C) Iran has not made any new approach to India on the nuclear issue, Nambiar said, admitting that he has not yet seen the report on the FM's September 3-4 Tehran visit. However, he observed, the GOI thinks Iran is gradually laying the groundwork to make requests of India for support in the IAEA. Tehran puts a lot of weight on India's "standing" in the IAEA and the nuclear question, as well as its traditional good relations. Gupta speculated that Iran is counting on China and Russia to avert sanctions, but wants to get India in its camp as well. Nambiar promised to convey to us any insights New Delhi might gain on the Iranian regime's plans. Nambiar and Gupta gave the impression that New Delhi is hoping that a diplomatic solution will appear among all the interested parties, without India having to make any hard choices (Ref A).

[4](#). (C) New Delhi has not approached Tehran with any offer to "bridge the gap" between the West and Iran, Nambiar stated, and Tehran has not contacted the GOI in this regard. Indian media reports emphasizing New Delhi's "independent" policy toward Iran (vice US-aligned) are mostly for domestic consumption, Nambiar postulated, but the FM may be trying to send a message to Iran that India could be a go-between if needed. Additionally, the media "spin" of PM Singh's July Washington Post interview in which he admitted to financial uncertainties in the pipeline proposal increased the pressure on FM Natwar Singh to demonstrate that India was not acting on Washington's bidding. A/DCM went over our recent demarche on Iran's nuclear activities (Refs B and C), echoing the Ambassador's point that an Iranian WMD capability could be a menace to India. Nambiar agreed with this point more forcefully than his MEA counterparts.

Optimistic Progress on Indo-Pak and Kashmir  
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[5](#). (C) Foreign Secretary Saran's September 1-2 Islamabad visit was a helpful preparation for the PM-Musharraf meeting planned for the UNGA margins in New York, Nambiar said. The September 5 PM dialogue with Hurriyat leaders (Ref D) also has given the GOI confidence in the ability to make parallel progress in Indo-Pak peace and Kashmir peace discussions. However, Nambiar cautioned, progress will have to be matched by a sense that cross-border infiltration and training camp activity has actually stopped, before New Delhi will believe that the Indo-Pak process has reached a new stage. The Indo-Pak peace dialogue progresses incrementally through these meetings, Nambiar observed, speculating there could be some significant new step forward at New York.

[6](#). (C) The next events following New York will be an Indian FM visit to Islamabad in November, Nambiar said, as well as the planned November SAARC summit. (Note: Nambiar's mention is the first we have heard of a November date for the FM meeting. The FS Joint Statement last week gave October 3-5

as the date. End Note) With all the "markers" laid out in the form of high-level bilateral interactions and meetings with J&K groups, the incremental progress should continue, he opined. The GOI would like to believe that progress is sustainable, and sees evidence of that on the surface, but still receives indications from intelligence and other sources that Pakistan is continuing to export terrorism to India. However, Nambiar added, the PM's optimistic outlook forces the Indian intelligence community to make a persuasive case for any negative views, giving Singh credibility when he raises those concerns with Musharraf.

17. (C) A/DCM pressed on the need for us to be clear about the metrics we use to determine whether the GOP is clamping down effectively on terrorism. Nambiar agreed that a renewal of India-US contacts to pass GOI data on continued training camp activity and infiltration, including coordinates, would be helpful in informing USG analysis of Pakistan's actions.

#### Bangladesh: Rising Concern -----

18. (C) The August 18 blasts in Bangladesh were "genuinely worrying," Nambiar said, stressing the GOI's surprise that it had no advance notice from intelligence sources of an operation so widespread. New Delhi is still uncertain of the "essential purpose" of the blasts, he said, pointing out that India had believed that the Islamic parties led by Jamat-e-Islami (JEI) wanted to take an electoral path to power, whereas the bomb blasts indicated an attack on the ruling BNP and the democratic process. If the blasts were in fact targeting the BNP's power, this would indicate a "far more extreme" Jama'atul Mujahedin Bangladesh (JMB) than previously assumed, and one that was out of JEI's control. The severance of ties between the BNP and Islamist groups might lead to increased instability and could endanger the continuation of democratic government in Dhaka, Nambiar worried. He was, nonetheless, hopeful that the SAARC summit would proceed as planned.

#### Comment: Upbeat on Pakistan -----

19. (C) Nambiar's optimistic outlook on Indo-Pak relations is a welcome change from the gloom of early summer amid rising concerns of terrorist attacks (Ref E), and indicates that FS Saran's Islamabad visit and the Hurriyat talks must have gone well. We expect that the Manmohan Singh-Musharraf meet in New York will result in additional small, but tangible, steps forward in the peace process.

10. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website:  
(<http://www.state.sgov/p/sa/newdelhi>)  
MULFORD